
Federal Register Document Drafting Handbook

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Chapter 5: Can I Submit a Computer File?

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Notes: In this chapter, “we,” “our,” or “OFR” refer to the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration, and “you” or “your” to Federal agencies that prepare documents for publication in the *Federal Register*.

Use the examples in this chapter as models for style, not content. Although many of these are single-spaced for visual impact, you must double-space your document.

5.1 Can I submit a computer file for publication in the *Federal Register*?

You can submit a computer file as an electronic original document, or as an electronic certified copy.

Electronic originals must be digitally signed, and can be submitted via e-mail or the web. Submitting an electronic original eliminates the need for paper copies. For more information, see section 5.3.

Electronic certified copies, submitted on disk, accompany a paper original and certified paper copies. For more information, see section 5.4.

5.2 What are the requirements for submitting computer files?

Document drafting guidelines.

Follow the drafting guidelines in Chapter 1, 2, or 3 of this handbook when you draft any *Federal Register* document, whether you plan to submit it on paper or as a computer file.

File format.

OFR accepts electronic originals or electronic certified copies in three formats. These are based on GPO (Government Printing Office) requirements.

- **MS-Word or WordPerfect.** A word processor file, prepared according to your agency's requirements, with no GPO typesetting codes.
- **Unformatted ASCII.** A plain text file, formatted with carriage returns and line feeds, with no GPO typesetting codes.
- **SGML coded and validated.** A file, usually in ASCII format, that is fully coded for GPO typesetting, accompanied by Microcomp page proof. For more information on GPO coding and Microcomp, contact your agency's printing officer or customer service representative at GPO.

If GPO uses your electronic file, they discount your agency's printing cost:

- \$33 per *Federal Register* page discount for MS-Word, WordPerfect, or unformatted ASCII files.
- \$171 per *Federal Register* page discount for SGML coded files.

GPO determines the discount that you receive for each document, based on their use of your data. GPO adjusts page rates and discounts periodically.

Billing Code.

For detailed information about billing codes, see section 1.3, 2.3, or 3.3 of this handbook. To assist GPO in billing your agency correctly, change the final letter of the billing code to reflect the document's file format. For MS-Word or WordPerfect documents, use "P." For Unformatted ASCII, use "U," and for SGML coded and validated, use "S."

Example 1: Billing Codes for electronic documents:

For an unformatted ASCII file:

BILLING CODE 4000-01-U

For a Word or WordPerfect file:

BILLING CODE 4000-01-P

For an SGML coded file:

BILLING CODE 4000-01-S

5.3 What are the specific requirements for electronic originals?

You may submit electronic original documents via e-mail or the web. These must be signed with a medium assurance level digital signature certificate, cross-certified by the Federal Bridge Certification Authority. Because OFR considers this electronic file to be an original document, submitting in this manner eliminates the need for paper copies.

You must agree to comply with OFR's procedures for submitting electronic originals, and your agency must acquire appropriate digital signature certificates. For up-to-date information, contact OFR's Technical Services Staff at (202) 741-6020.

OFR accepts MS-Word, WordPerfect, Unformatted ASCII, or coded SGML files as digitally signed originals.

5.4 What are the specific requirements for certified electronic copies?

If you submit a signed paper original and two certified paper copies, you may include a certified electronic copy on diskette or CD-ROM. Submitting this certified electronic copy may reduce your printing costs and promote accuracy.

Certified electronic copies, whether MS-Word, WordPerfect, Unformatted ASCII, or coded in SGML, must follow these requirements:

Verification / Certification letter.

The certified electronic copy should be the file you used to print the paper original. Include a verification/certification letter with each document, certifying that the paper original and electronic copy are identical. The Certifying Officer, Liaison Officer, or signer of the document may sign this letter. (See Appendix A for a model letter.)

In case of discrepancies, the signed paper original always stands as the official text. It is the legal basis of your agency's action.

Type of disk.

High Density 3.5 Diskettes. OFR accepts certified electronic copies on high density (HD), 3.5 inch diskettes, formatted for PC. We cannot accept double density (DD) diskettes. Use new or reformatted diskettes to ensure that we receive a readable diskette with no extra files. Scan the diskette to ensure that it is virus-free.

CD-ROM. OFR also accepts certified electronic copies on CD-ROM. Finalize the CD so it can be read without proprietary software.

Disk Preparation.

If the document spans two or more files, merge these as a single file, in sequence to match the paper original. If the file is too large to fit on one diskette, submit it on CD-ROM.

Submit only one document per disk. Send a separate disk, and include a separate verification / certification letter for each document.

The certified electronic copy must be the only file on the disk. Delete drafts, supporting documents, or any other files before you send the disk to OFR.

Do not submit password protected files or disks.

Disk Labeling.

Include the following information on the label of the disk:

- Name of your agency.
- Name of the file on the disk.
- File format: ASCII, Word, WordPerfect, or SGML.
- Subject heading, CFR citation, or agency docket number, tying it to the paper document.

5.5 How do I make changes to an electronic submission?

To correct any document, you must follow the procedures in section 4.2. The following requirements also apply to documents accompanied by disk submissions.

Changes to Word, WordPerfect, or uncoded ASCII files. If the changes are extensive, we may require you to submit a new original document, a new certified electronic copy, and a new verification/certification letter, or we may return your submission to you for correction and resubmission.

If the GPO must make editorial corrections to your file, they may revoke your printing discount.

Changes to SGML files. We will make no changes to an SGML coded file, other than computing and inserting dates and completing the file line at the end of the document. To make other changes, you must submit a corrected file, a new verification/certification letter, and new Microcomp pages (see section 4.3).